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# Papers of E. A. Seamands

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**Asbury Theological Seminary**  
**Special Collections Department**  
**Manuscripts Collection**

**Papers of Earl Arnett Seamands**

**ARC1984 -004**

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**Introduction**

The E. A. Seamands papers include biographical material, correspondence, literary productions, personal journals (1912-1984), clippings, scrapbook materials, photographs, blueprints, a movie film, and an audio recording. Seamands was a civil engineer and missionary in South India from 1919 to 1957. After retiring he built over 200 churches in India.

The collection contains 3.8 cubic feet and mainly covers his adult life. Literary productions, including personal journals and scrapbook materials make up the bulk of the collection.

The Seamands papers were given to the Special Collection Department of the B. L. Fisher Library of Asbury Theological Seminary by his son J. T. Seamands. Much of the scrapbook materials were loaned to the library to be photocopied. These photocopies are included in the collection.

**Scope and Content**

The E. A. Seamands papers, with their emphasis on the South India Conference of the Methodist Church, consist mainly of documents from 1920 to 1984 with the bulk of the collection between 1950 and 1984. Documents relating to Ida Shields, his mother-in-law, predate him. There is some correspondence concerning his life and ministry that was sent to the family after his death and is included in the collection.

The collection is composed of correspondence, scrapbook material, literary productions, personal journals (1912-1984), clippings, photos, blueprints, a movie film and audio cassette. Most series are arranged chronologically except for the correspondence series which is arranged alphabetically by correspondent. A transcript of an interview with Seamands from 1981 adds to the biographical information. Large collections of his prayer letters ("missiles") are included.

A significant section of the collection contains photocopies of scrapbooks from 1919 to 1983 which were loaned to the library by the family. Items have been left in original order, organized only by year. Within this section is much correspondence, while relatively little can be found in the correspondence series. The size of his address book would suggest that this is a very small sample of his correspondence.

Some photographs have been placed with appropriate documents. The rest are in a separate series. The film documents the Dharur Jathra (Indian Campmeeting). An audio cassette of Seamand's memorial service is included.

The collection provides much information about the Methodist Church in South India and includes blueprints representative of the many churches Seamands built. Miscellaneous memorabilia include mounted awards and maps and tributes on cloth.

### **Biographical Sketch**

Earl Arnett Seamands (Thatha) was born in Lexington, Kentucky on October 5, 1891, the son of John L. Seamands, a conductor for the Southern Pacific Railroad, and Jennie Capehart Seamands. In 1896 the family moved to Tuscon, Arizona, where E. A. graduated from high school in 1910. He attended the University of Cincinnati from 1911 to 1916, graduating at the top of his class with a degree in Civil Engineering. In 1915 he married Yvonne Emily Shields; they had 2 sons, David and John T.

Saved in 1913, sanctified in 1915, Seamands pastored a church in Pemberville, Ohio, from 1916 to 1919.

From 1919 to 1925, Seamands served his first term as a missionary for the South India Conference of the Methodist Church. He was located in Kolar, Richmond Town (a section of Bangalore) and Bidar. During this term he established the first Dharur Jathra which has become the largest camp meeting in the world. During his second term (1926-1933), he served as evangelist at Belgaum and superintendent of Bangalore District. In his third term (1934-1941) he was superintendent of Raichur and Gulbarga and built his first Indian church. For both the fourth (1944-1951) and fifth (1952-1957) terms he served in Gulbarga.

In the 27 years after his retirement in 1957, Seamands was responsible for the building of nearly 200 churches in India. He made 12 “shuttle” missions to India, during which time he was given the name “Thatha,” a Kanarese word meaning ‘beloved, honorable grandfather.’ In 1975 he was named Missionary of the Century by the South India Conference. The Engineering College of the University of Cincinnati named him a Distinguished Alumnus in 1980. In 1983 he was inducted into the Tuscon High School Badger Hall Foundation Hall of Fame.

Seamands died on February 25, 1984 in Vellore Christian Hospital during his twelfth “shuttle” trip.

A detailed biography may be found in *Engineered for Glory* by John T. and Ruth Seamands.

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**Series Description**

Series 1

Biographical

3 folders

1910-1984

Arranged chronologically

Includes news clippings, tributes from his sons at his funeral, personal biographical statements and licenses.

Series 2

Correspondence

21 folders

1933-1983

Arranged alphabetically by correspondent, thereafter by date.

Contains correspondence to and from EAZ. Interesting correspondents include J. Waskom Pickett, Neil Armstrong, David McKenna.

Considerably more correspondence can be found within the scrapbook material arranged by date. Additional correspondence from L. Gill to EAS's mother-in-law concerning their India experience is also included.

Series 3

Subject Files

3 Folders

1951-1984

Arranged chronologically

Fund raising material, architectural plans and correspondence relating to churches constructed in India by EAS.

Series 4

Reports

1 folder

1919-1955

Arranged chronologically

Superintendent's reports from the Indian Methodist Church districts of Bangalore, Bedar, belgaum, Raichur, Gulbarga, and Yadgiri.

Series 5

Literary Productions

3 boxes

1912-1984

Arranged chronologically

Includes transcription of an oral interview, EAS's civil engineering thesis, articles and pamphlets written by EAS, prayer letters (1937-1983) and non-devotional, personal journals (1912-1984).

Series 6

Literary Productions

1 folder

1918-1982

Arranged chronologically

Includes war classification cards and an authorization for burial arrangements.

Series 7

Scrapbook Materials

1 cubic foot

Arranged chronologically within subseries

Includes awards and tributes, and address book and items concerning family members. Photocopies of actual scrapbooks (1919-1971) are arranged as found, generally chronologically. Includes correspondence, copies of *The More Excellent Way* and articles. Photocopies of one scrapbook of prayer letters were incorporated into Literary Productions, Series 5.

Series 8

Maps

1 folder

1983

One map of Shurapur District, India.

Series 9

Lists

2 folders

1980-1983

Includes lists of churches constructed and results of a survey in Bidar district.

Series 10

Printed Material

5 folders

1911-1980

Arranged chronologically within subseries

Includes awards, certificates, pamphlets, and a Tucson, AZ High School yearbook, 1911.

Series 11

Photographic Materials

5 folders

1923-1983

Arranged chronologically

Positive and negative prints. One movie film of the Dharur Jatra (Indian camp meeting).

Series 12

Audio Recordings

1 folder

1984

One audio cassette of EAS memorial service.

Series 13

Memorabilia

1 cubic foot

1925-1983

Includes plaques, cloth maps and tributes in wooden and metal "caskets."

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**Box/Folder Inventory**

<b>Box</b>	<b>Folder</b>	<b>Series</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Date</b>
<b>1</b>	1	Biographical		1910-1984
	2	Biographical	Licenses	1920
	3	Biographical	News clippings	1960-1984
	4	Correspondence	Armstrong, Neil A.	1979
	5	Correspondence	Buttrick, M. J.	1933
	6	Correspondence	Clark, Graham M. D.	1963
	7	Correspondence	Cook, Merle F.	1964
	8	Correspondence	Gill, Laura	1933
	9	Correspondence	Gnany, K.	1972
	10	Correspondence	Hoskote Methodist Church	1982
	11	Correspondence	Jacob, J.	1970
	12	Correspondence	James, Y. R.	1933
	13	Correspondence	Keyes, Julia Atkinson	1960
	14	Correspondence	McKenna, David L.	1983
	15	Correspondence	Mitchell, E. A.	1977
	16	Correspondence	Peter, M. Elia	1982
	17	Correspondence	Pickett, J. Waskom	1980



	18	Correspondence	Rattsma, M.	1979
	19	Correspondence	Sagan, Margaret Pickett	1983
	20	Correspondence	Samuel, D.	1983
	21	Correspondence	Seamands, Sylvia and Linda	1980
	22	Correspondence	Ullagaddi, S. S.	1982
	23	Correspondence	Wesley, Ralph G.	1977
	24	Correspondence	Jay	[1978]
	25	Correspondence	Church Construction-Correspondence with Churches	1975-1984
	26	Correspondence	Church Construction-Drawings	1951-1984
	27	Correspondence	Church Construction-Fund raising	1982-1984
	28	Correspondence	District Reports, South India	1919-1955
	29	Correspondence	Reminiscences	1948-1982
	30	Correspondence	Speeches	1981
	31	Correspondence	Articles	1964
	32	Correspondence	Articles-Irani, Shri, Homi	1916-1981
	33	Correspondence	Pamphlets-"The Church Your Church Can Be"	1963
	34	Correspondence	Pamphlets-"Our Faith in the Holy Spirit"	1944
	35	Correspondence	Prayer Letters	1950
	36	Correspondence	Prayer Letters	1937-1960
	37	Correspondence	Prayer Letters	1961-1969
	38	Correspondence	Prayer Letters	1970-1979
	39	Correspondence	Prayer Letters	1980-1983
<b>2</b>	1	Literary Productions	Journals	1912-1913
	2	Literary Productions	Journals	1914, 1919
	3	Literary Productions	Journals	1944, 1946, 1948
	4	Literary Productions	Journals	1956-1958
	5	Literary Productions	Journals	1958-1960
	6	Literary Productions	Journals	1961-1963
<b>3</b>	1	Literary Productions	Journals	1964-1966
	2	Literary Productions	Journals	1967-1969
	3	Literary Productions	Journals	1970-1972

4	4	Literary Productions	Journals	1973-1975
	5	Literary Productions	Journals	1976-1978
	1	Literary Productions	Journals	1979-1981
	2	Literary Productions	Journals	1982-1984
	3	Literary Productions	Journals-News clippings	1957-1979
	4	Literary Productions	Thesis	1916
	5	Legal Documents		1918-1982
	6	Scrapbook	Awards	1977-1983
	7	Scrapbook	Tributes	1922-1981
	8	Scrapbook	Address Book	N.D.
5	9	Scrapbook	Family-Seamands, Yvonne Emily	1913-1981
	10	Scrapbook	Family-Shields, Ida Miller	1880-1943
	1	Scrapbook	Scrapbook (1919-1933)	1919
	2	Scrapbook	Scrapbook (1919-1933)	1920
	3	Scrapbook	Scrapbook (1919-1933)	1921
	4	Scrapbook	Scrapbook (1919-1933)	1922
	5	Scrapbook	Scrapbook (1919-1933)	1923
	6	Scrapbook	Scrapbook (1919-1933)	1924
	7	Scrapbook	Scrapbook (1919-1933)	1925
	8	Scrapbook	Scrapbook (1919-1913)	1926
	9	Scrapbook	Scrapbook (1919-1933)	1927
	10	Scrapbook	Scrapbook (1919-1933)	1928
	11	Scrapbook	Scrapbook (1919-1933)	1929
	12	Scrapbook	Scrapbook (1919-1933)	1930
	13	Scrapbook	Scrapbook (1919-1933)	1931
	14	Scrapbook	Scrapbook (1919-1933)	1932
	15	Scrapbook	Scrapbook (1919-1933)	1933
	16	Scrapbook	Scrapbook (1933-1944)	1933
	17	Scrapbook	Scrapbook (1933-1944)	1934
	18	Scrapbook	Scrapbook (1933-1944)	1935
	19	Scrapbook	Scrapbook (1933-1944)	1936
	20	Scrapbook	Scrapbook (1933-1944)	1937
	21	Scrapbook	Scrapbook (1933-1944)	1938
	22	Scrapbook	Scrapbook (1933-1944)	1939
	23	Scrapbook	Scrapbook (1933-1944)	1940
	24	Scrapbook	Scrapbook (1933-1944)	1941
	25	Scrapbook	Scrapbook (1933-1944)	1942
	26	Scrapbook	Scrapbook (1933-1944)	1943

6	27	Scrapbook	Scrapbook (1944-1950)	1944
	28	Scrapbook	Scrapbook (1944-1950)	1945
	29	Scrapbook	Scrapbook (1944-1950)	1946
	30	Scrapbook	Scrapbook (1944-1950)	1947
	31	Scrapbook	Scrapbook (1944-1950)	1948
	1	Scrapbook	Scrapbook (1944-1950)	1949
	2	Scrapbook	Scrapbook (1944-1950)	1950
	3	Scrapbook	Scrapbook (1951-1958)	1953-1955
	4	Scrapbook	Scrapbook (1951-1958)	1956-1957
	5	Scrapbook	Scrapbook (1951-1958)	1958
	6	Scrapbook	Scrapbook (1959-1961)	1959
	7	Scrapbook	Scrapbook (1959-1961)	1960
	8	Scrapbook	Scrapbook (1959-1961)	1961
	9	Scrapbook	Scrapbook (1962-1963 )	1962
7	10	Scrapbook	Scrapbook (1962-1963 )	1963
	11	Scrapbook	Scrapbook (1964-1965 )	1964
	12	Scrapbook	Scrapbook (1964-1965 )	1965
	13	Scrapbook	Scrapbook (1966)	1966
	14	Scrapbook	Scrapbook (1967)	1967
	1	Scrapbook	Scrapbook (1968-1969)	1968
	2	Scrapbook	Scrapbook (1968-1969)	1969
	3	Scrapbook	Scrapbook (1970-1971)	1970
	4	Scrapbook	Scrapbook (1970-1971)	1971
	5	Maps	Shurapur District	1983
	6	Lists	Bidar District, Indian	1983
	7	Lists	Churches by EAS	1980-1983
	8	Printed Material	Awards	1952-1980
	9	Printed Material	Certificates	1911, 1974
	10	Printed Material	Pamphlets	1971-1975
	11	Printed Material	Programs	1916-1960
	12	Printed Material	Yearbook-Tucson High School AZ	1910
	13	Photographic Material	Positive Prints	1923
	14	Photographic Material	Positive Prints	1924
	15	Photographic Material	Positive Prints	1925
	16	Photographic Material	Positive Prints	1930

17	Photographic Material	Positive Prints	1931
18	Photographic Material	Positive Prints	1934
19	Photographic Material	Positive Prints	1936
20	Photographic Material	Positive Prints	1939
21	Photographic Material	Positive Prints	1949
22	Photographic Material	Positive Prints	1958
23	Photographic Material	Positive Prints	1959
24	Photographic Material	Positive Prints	1960
25	Photographic Material	Positive Prints	1961
26	Photographic Material	Positive Prints	1962
27	Photographic Material	Positive Prints	1963
28	Photographic Material	Positive Prints	1964
29	Photographic Material	Positive Prints	1965
30	Photographic Material	Positive Prints	1970
31	Photographic Material	Positive Prints	1974
32	Photographic Material	Positive Prints	1975
33	Photographic Material	Positive Prints	1978
34	Photographic Material	Positive Prints	1983
35	Photographic Material	Positive and Negative Prints	N.D.
36	Photographic Material	Movie Film-"The Spring of Eternal Life" The Dharur Jatra	1973
37	Audio Recording	Audio Cassette-EAS Memorial Service	1984
8	1	Memorabilia (Records Center Box) includes plaques, clothe maps, and tributes in wooden and metal "caskets"	

